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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

ALL truth is good. The truth revealed in 'the glorious gospel of the blessed God,' is peculiarly good:—good in its own nature;—good in its holy and happy influence;—good in all its present, and in all its eternal consequences. Let me exhort you, my brethren, to hold it fast *purely, firmly, meekly, practically*.—*Purely*, without any admixture of error:—*firmly*, not 'halting between two opinions,' fluctuating and undecided, or imagining that truth and error may be embraced and held with equal safety:—*meekly*, maintaining it with an humble consciousness of your own natural blindness, and a feeling of your entire obligation to the enlightening Spirit of God;—with benevolent affection to the persons of your opponents; and with the patience and gentleness of Christ—*practically*, exemplifying in the whole of your conduct, personal and social, private and public, in the family, in the church, and in the world, its renewing, and purifying, and gladdening efficacy.

To all, I would say, and say with the earnestness of affectionate entreaty, 'Search the Scriptures.' Examine them for yourselves. Examine them with a seriousness becoming the importance of the inquiry, and the magnitude of those consequences that are necessarily connected with it. Derive no foolish and vain excuse for neglecting to do this, from those differences of sentiment which you may observe to subsist amongst the professed followers of Jesus Christ. The sentiments of others are nothing to you. It is not of others, but of yourselves, that you must give an account to God. Let each individual, therefore, attend to the gospel as if he were himself the only creature to whom it is addressed. O! beware of satisfying yourselves at present, with such excuses as, you must be conscious, will never bear the scrutiny of the great day.—Your immortal souls are at stake. Be, therefore, in earnest. Take nothing upon trust. What you hear from us, or from others, examine by the light of the Divine word. If we speak not accord-

ing to that word, there is no light in us. It is not what we say, but what God says, that is 'able to save the soul.' Wardlaw.

THE TRINITY.

IN our last number, we gave "a comparison of evidence respecting Unitarianism and Trinitarianism," in which it is stated that Matt. xxviii. 19. is the only text that can be adduced, which is in any sense capable of being admitted as a parallel with the many hundred plain passages in favor of the Unity of God. Lest this assertion should be misunderstood, we offer the following remarks.

Trinitarians seem to have taken it for granted, that, if the *Deity of Jesus Christ* can be proved, the whole doctrine for which they contend, is established of course. But this does not follow. Should they succeed in proving the Deity of the Son, they would then have to do what is perhaps more difficult, i. e. to prove the *personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit*. And if they should do all this, even then their task would not be fully accomplished. It would yet remain to them to show that the Son and the Holy Spirit are not distinct from the Father—that there are not *three Gods*, but one only.—A trinity in unity, although wholly unintelligible, is an essential part of their doctrine.

Now we say there is no *direct* proof of this incomprehensible union in the Godhead, unless it be Matthew xxviii. 19. and we think *he* must be already a believer in the doctrine, who perceives it to be plainly taught here; for this text is wholly silent as to the requisite distinction of the perfect *equality* and perfect *unity* of the three persons. But if God be such a compound, it must be proved that he is by the explicit declarations of Scripture. Reason cannot *infer* this from indirect expressions, because it is wholly unreasonable. We cannot understand it; and if we believe it, our belief must rest solely upon the authority of scripture.

We say then—TO TRINITARIANS,

"Produce to us any passage of Scripture, which contains the doctrine of the Trinity,

explicitly stated, and we will give to every word of it our most unfeigned respect and acquiescence. Show us a single example of doxology to Father, Son and Holy Ghost—three persons in one God, and you shall hear it from our mouths as often as from your own. Tell us where to find *one* instance of the phrase *God the Son*, or *God the Holy Ghost*, and you will never hear another objection to it from us. Present to us what you call the doctrine of the Trinity in *any* form, in which you truly find it in any passage of the Scriptures, and then reproach us if we do not cheerfully receive it exactly in that form.”

—♦—
ON THE SUPPOSED SCRIPTURE PROOF OF A TRINITY.

It is commonly said that Unitarians reject the doctrine of the Trinity, because they cannot comprehend it. But this is altogether a mistake. We reject the doctrine only because the Bible does not teach it. If Trinitarians can shew us that the Scriptures declare plainly the existence of three distinct subsistences, or persons, in that being whom we worship as ONE GOD, we will believe.—But we require proof direct and clear. The doctrine of the Trinity must be shewn to be plainly revealed; it must not rest solely on figurative, ambiguous, and doubtful forms of expression.

Let us now consider those Scripture proofs that are chiefly urged.

I. The Hebrew word *Elohim*.

Deut. vi. 4. *Hear O Israel the Lord, our God is one Lord.* The Hebrew word *Elohim*, here and elsewhere translated *God*, has a plural signification. From this Trinitarians infer that there must be a plurality of persons in the Godhead; and they see fit to fix the number at three. But the fact is, *Elohim* is a word that may have either a singular or a plural signification, as the subject to which it is applied, requires. When applied to the heathen Gods, we do not hesitate to receive it in the plural sense, for we know they were many. But when applied to *Jehovah*, we receive it in the singular sense, because He is every where declared to be *One*. And we are authorized to do so, both by the idiom of the Hebrew language, and by the use of the word *Elohim*, in other parts of the Old Testament.

In all languages, there are some words of a plural termination, that have a singular signification. In Hebrew “Words that express

dominion, dignity, majesty, are commonly put in the plural.”* Thus (Gen. xxiv. 9. 10.) on account of the great dignity and authority of the patriarch Abraham, the word, which we translate *Master*, is in the original *Adonim* in the plural number. “And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham, his master (*Adonim* literally *masters*)—and the servant took ten camels of his master (*Adonim*); for all the goods of his master (*Adonim*) were in his hands.” Also verse 51, we read “the wife of the son of thy master” (*Adonim*.) Agreeably to the same idiom, Potiphar is called (*Adonim*) master of Joseph (Gen. xxxix. 2. 3. 7. 8. 16. 19. 20—xl. 7.) Pharaoh is styled (*Adonim*) lord of his Butler and Baker (Gen. xl. 1.) And Joseph, as governor of Egypt is denominated *Adonim*, (Gen. xlii. 30. 33. xliv. 8.)

We may also mention the word *Baalim*, which, though it has a plural termination, is often used when only one person is spoken of.

But what is directly to our purpose, the very word under consideration, *Elohim*, is so used by the Sacred writers, in a great variety of instances, that even Trinitarians cannot dispute its singular signification. In Exodus vii. 1. it is applied to Moses. “And the Lord said unto Moses, see, I have made thee a God (*Elohim*) to Pharaoh.” Again, Exodus xxxii. 4, 8, 31, the molten calf which Aaron made for the Israelites, they called *Elohim*. Our translators have indeed given in these instances (why we know not) the plural rendering; but surely no one can suppose that the Israelites or the writer of the narrative had any idea of a plurality of persons in the molten calf.

There are many other instances, in which individual heathen Gods are called *Elohim*. Judges viii. 33. “And it came to pass as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again—and made Baal-berith their God” (*Elohim*.) Judges xvi. 23, 24. “Then the Lords of the Philistines gathered them together, for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon *their God*, and to rejoice; for they said, *our God* hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. And when the people saw him, they praised *their God*, for they said, *our God* hath delivered into our hands our enemy. In all these instances the plural *Elo-*

*“In the Hebrew language the plural number expresses the superlative degree. The word translated *God*, in its singular form, expresses *power*; in its plural form it signifies *omnipotence*.”

him is used although Dagon, a single idol is spoken of. Again, 1 Kings, xi. 33. 'Because they have forsaken me, and have worshiped Ashtoreth, the Goddess of the Sidonians; Chemosh, the God of the Moabites, and Milcom, the God of the children of Ammon.' In these several cases, the plural Elohim is used in the original, although each of the idol deities Ashtoreth, Chemosh and Milcom, was a single person. Other examples may be found, Numbers xxv. 1—5. Deut. iv. 7.—1 Sam. iv. 5. 8. 1 Kings xi. 5.—2 Kings i. 2. xix. 37.

These are undeniable proofs of the singular meaning of the word Elohim, and if at all capable of being taken in the singular number, it ought to be so understood when applied to that great Being, whose Unity is asserted in Scripture in the most plain and positive terms.

"If this word necessarily implies a plurality, how is it that the Jews have never so understood it when applied to the true God? How is it, that the very people among whom and for whose use, the Old Testament was written; by whom both it and the language in which it was written have been preserved; and from whom all our knowledge of that language must have been derived, have never been Trinitarians? Is it to be thought they have always continued ignorant of the true meaning of a most important word in their native language, a word associated with every part of their religion?"

When in the New Testament passages are quoted from the Old, in which the word Elohim occurs, the Greek word Theos is used to express its meaning. This shows how Jesus and his apostles understood it, and ought to decide its meaning. Had it been intended to express a plurality in the one God though the Jews had never so understood it, surely the New Testament would have pointed this out, instead of giving us a word in its place, that is absolutely singular."

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST NOT ESSENTIAL TO THE DIVINITY OF HIS RELIGION.

THE question between us and Trinitarians is not one that involves the divine origin of the Christian Religion, and cannot therefore, with propriety be called a question as to the Divinity of our Saviour. We believe that God is one in the most absolute sense, that Jesus Christ is inferior and dependant, but we

believe as fully as any other Christians, that our religion is from Heaven, and that he who revealed it, came from God and went to God.

"THERE is no character in which we find him unfolded, in which we do not most cheerfully, reverently, and gratefully acknowledge him; we own him as the interpreter of God's Will, as the visible representative of God's Glory, as the angel of God's Grace; and we take all his words—being, as he himself declares, not his own, but his Father's who sent him—as the words of God himself. A great obstacle to calm and unprejudiced examination of this subject, is produced by an idea that it affects the Divinity of our Lord, which, when we consider that the divine origin of our religion, the divine commission of our Saviour, and his possession of divine powers, are left on every theory unquestioned and entire, will appear to have no just foundation. All this, surely it is possible to believe, in the fairest meaning of the words, without supposing that our Saviour is himself that very God in whose name he tells us he spoke, without believing that he is at once the Sender and the Sent—the Mediator between himself and man; without, in short, believing in a proposition, which confounds not only all the propriety, but all the meaning of language—a proposition not simply imperfectly comprehended, but wholly unintelligible: not merely of a difficult meaning, but absolutely with no assignable meaning at all."

In the second place, it should be carefully remarked, that a belief in the perfect unity of the Divine Nature is perfectly consistent with the conviction, that all the blessings of Christianity flow from God, as their original source. It has been sometimes supposed, that unless we believe the absolute Deity of Christ, we must attribute our salvation to a being infinitely inferior to God. But surely, whatever may be the nature or dignity of the agent, whom our Maker employs as the instrument of his beneficence, it is not the less to be regarded as flowing solely from him. The author, the plan, the terms, the means, and the efficacy of the means of salvation, are, on every supposition, all and wholly of God; nor is this truth in the slightest degree affected, or even touched by the inquiry, whether or not it is revealed that there are mysterious divisions in the unity of the divine nature."

ON THE PRIMITIVE GOVERNMENT OF THE
CHRISTIAN CHURCH.*(From Dr. Bancroft's Sermons.)*

THE Apostles and Evangelists acted by divine authority; and our present inquiry is, What is the constitution of the Christian Church as they established it? Where does the right of election to office, the authority to ordain the pastor elect, and the power to discipline the members of the Christian society ordinarily rest?

In respect to discipline, it is apparent that neither Christ nor his apostles empowered either a single Bishop, or the presbytery to try members on a charge of conduct unworthy the Christian name, or to inflict censures on those convicted of offence. On the contrary, this power was certainly lodged with the assembly of Christians. Examine the directions of our Saviour respecting measures to be adopted with an offending brother, contained in the 18th chapter of Matthew, and you will find that the authority to discipline is not committed to the pastor or to the presbytery, but to the brethren.—“If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” Look into the direction of St Paul concerning the member guilty of a public and most scandalous offence in the Corinthian Church. The apostle does not give his orders for discipline to the particular pastor of this Church, nor to an individual Bishop, nor to the convocation of the presbytery, but to the Christian body.—“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus.”—(1 Cor. v. 4. 5.) Deprive him of his Christian privileges, that he may be brought to repentance, and thereby save his soul. When our religion was taken under the auspices of the civil government, the clergy took on themselves the title of ecclesiasticks, denominated themselves

the Church, and assumed power to lord it over the heritage of God. But no authority is found in the bible to denominate the clergy the Church. Nor, in primitive times, was the distinction between congregation and Church known. For three hundred years at least, after the death of our Saviour, the Christian society existed in one body; and in one united society Christian disciples attended public worship, and joined in all the ordinances of the gospel; and in one assembly, all concerns of general interest were transacted.—To this assembly, and not to the clergy, the right of electing to office, and the power of government, were committed.

That the election of Deacons, in the age of the apostles, was by the assembled brethren, cannot be doubted. When complaint was made of the unequal distribution of public charity, “the twelve apostles called the multitude unto them and said, (Acts vi. 2-5) It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry. And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost,” &c.

The apostles during their lives, unquestionably selected and ordained ministers.—As inspired men, they exercised more power in the Church, than they permitted ordinary ministers, their successors, to exercise. But even in the high concern of appointing an apostle to take the place of the fallen Judas, regard was had by divine direction, to the right of the brethren in electing their ministers. Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and directed them to choose two candidates for the office of the apostate; and he selected one of these by lot, to take a part in the apostleship from which Judas, by transgression fell.

From scriptural history it is evident, that pastors of particular Churches were not uniformly ordained by the apostles or by evangelists during their lives. Nay, it is apparent, evangelists themselves did not always receive ordination from the apostles. St. Paul thus exhorts his son Timothy—“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, and the laying on the hands of the presbytery.” Paul and Barna-

bas, as well as Timothy, were separated to their work, by the imposition of the hands of the presbytery.

The sacred history of the Christian Church is not continued beyond the lives of the apostles. We must depend on the authority of ecclesiastical historians for the usages and practices of the next age. Respecting the choice of ministers, there is not complete harmony among them. Some affirm that the election was solely with the brethren; others favor the supposition, that ordained ministers nominated candidates to vacant churches;—but they concede that the brethren had a right to reject the candidate nominated, without assigning a reason for rejecting him.—The fact probably was, that ministers then, as they frequently do now, recommended candidates; and perhaps in some instances, the recommendation, which societies at first solicited as a favor, ministers eventually claimed as their right of nomination. In the western Church, pastors of particular Churches, and even Bishops, were chosen by the brethren till 1050, when the council of Avignon deprived them of this privilege.

The ordination of candidates was in usual cases considered as the appropriate office of ordained pastors; but when peculiar circumstances rendered it expedient, lay ordination was acknowledged to be valid.

Churches in primitive times were independent. They possessed equal rights, and each had the exclusive management of its own concerns. But to a certain extent a community of interests has ever existed among neighboring Churches; and ecclesiastical councils have been common in every age. But general councils, on scriptural grounds, I conceive, have authority only to give advice. They do not possess power to coerce the adoption of measures recommended. Particular ecclesiastical councils, called mutually by the parties in controversy, are similar to references in civil affairs, and their results are binding on the parties only by their own agreement.

I have gone into this review for two purposes; 1st—To make it manifest that we have a reason to give for the constitution and order of congregational Churches. And 2d—That a view of the primitive state of the Christian Church being fixed in your minds, you may be the better able to judge of the corruptions and abuses, which at a subsequent age were introduced.

ON THE GREATER IMPORTANCE OF RIGHT PRACTICE THAN OF A SOUND FAITH IN RELIGION.

MATT. vii. 21.

Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you,—depart from me ye that work iniquity.

THESE words are some of the most striking in the whole New Testament. Our Lord knew the tendency which there is in mankind to religious hypocrisy and superstition. He saw how prone they are to lay a stress for acceptance on many things that have no connexion with true goodness; and therefore he declares in a manner the most plain and solemn, that nothing but avoiding iniquity, and doing the will of his Father, can be of any consequence to our acceptance, or avail to preserve us from condemnation in that day, when he shall come to call all nations before him to receive their last sentences. In particular, he assures us, that no invocation of his name, no honor we can profess for him, no zeal in preaching his religion, no extraordinary endowments or abilities of any kind, will then recommend us to favor, or do us the least service. We may call him Lord, Lord—we may prophesy in his name, and even cast out demons, and work miracles; but unless we do God's will, we shall be disowned and rejected by him.

The same doctrine has been taught us in a variety of other places in the gospel history. When a certain person asked our Lord, "Are there few that be saved?" his answer was, "Strive to enter in at the straight gate, for many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut too the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, he shall answer and say, I know you not whence you are. Then shall ye begin to say, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.—But he shall say, I know you not whence you are, depart from me all ye workers of iniquity." When he was informed once that his mother and his brethren stood without desiring to speak to him, he took occasion to declare, that those only he considered as his mother, brothers and sisters (i. e. entitled to

any particular regard from him) who did the will of his Father. When a certain woman once called out in the middle of the crowd. "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked," he replied, yea, rather blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it."

When (he tells us in Matt. xiii. 41) he shall hereafter come at the end of the world, it will be "to gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them who do iniquity." St. Peter declared on a very solemn occasion, "In every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him." "Circumcision is nothing (says St. Paul) and uncircumcision is nothing;" and in the same sense, we may say, "notions and doctrines are nothing, but keeping the commandments of God." "The kingdom of God, (he likewise says in Rom. xiv. 17) is not meat and drink," that is, it is not the observance of any rites or ceremonies, but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; and he only, that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God. To the same purpose, the apostle declares (in 1 Cor. xiii) that though he had the gift of prophesying, and understood all mysteries, and though he had all faith, so as to be able to remove mountains, yet if he had not charity, he was nothing.

The well known words of the prophet Micah, deserve further your particular recollection here. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself to the most High God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression—the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."—But there would be no end of reciting to you all the passages of this kind in the Bible.—The uniform and constant doctrine of the Scriptures is, *that doing the will of God, and avoiding iniquity, is the end, the sum and the substance of true religion*; and that all we can profess, or know, or believe, is vain and worthless, when considered as of itself, in any degree a foundation of God's favor, and of future happiness. In such strong terms have the scriptures asserted this, and so much have they reprobated the contrary doctrine, that I almost wonder it has been possible for

Christians to make rites and forms so much the object of their zeal, or to lay so much stress, as they have done, on faith and sentiments. This is truly a fact of the most melancholy nature, and one of the most pernicious of all errors; and I hope you will bear with me when I endeavor to prove this, and to hold your attention to the nature, the evidence, the importance, and the consequence of the following truth, *that there is nothing fundamental in religion besides sincerely desiring to know, and faithfully doing the will of God.*

Dr. Price's Sermons.

"We may die," says the celebrated Wesley, "without the knowledge of many truths, and yet be carried into Abraham's bosom: but if we die without love; what will knowledge avail? Just as much as it avails the devil and his angels! I will not quarrel with you about any opinion: only see that your hearts be right towards God, that you know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, that you love your neighbor, and walk as your Master walked, and I desire no more. I am sick of opinions: I am weary to bear them: my soul loathes their frothy food. Give me solid and substantial religion: give me an humble and gentle lover of God and man; and a man full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy; a man laying himself out in the works of faith, the patience of hope, the labor of love. Let my soul be with these christians wheresoever they are and whatsoever opinions they are of.—'Whosoever' thus 'doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother.'

HYMN.

'Faith without works is dead,'—James ii. 26.

ONE cup of healing oil and wine,
One tear drop shed on mercy's shrine,
Is thrice more grateful, Lord! to thee,
Than lifted eye, or bended knee.

To doers only of the word,
Propitious is the righteous Lord;
He hears their cries, accepts their prayers,
And heals their wounds, and soothes their cares.

In true and genuine faith, we trace
The source of every Christian grace;
Within the pious breast it plays,
A living fount of joy and praise.

Drummond.

FUNDAMENTAL.

THERE is nothing fundamental in religion besides sincerely desiring to know, and faithfully doing the will of God. Had any thing more been fundamental, our Lord would certainly not have expressed himself as he does Matt. vii. 21. He would not have declared so absolutely as he does, that nothing but doing the will of his Father was of any value in his sight; but he would have said, what many of his followers are continually saying, that holding the orthodox faith, and receiving such and such doctrines, were likewise necessary. Instead of representing himself, as hereafter dooming to misery only the workers of iniquity, he would have represented himself as also rejecting and condemning those who deny certain points of speculation. In truth, simple error, when not separated from an honest heart, our Lord seems never to consider as an object of dislike or censure. He bestowed the highest commendations on Nathaniel, at the very time that he believed Jesus, could not be the true Messiah, from the influence of so poor a prejudice as that nothing good could come out of Nazareth. The apostles, also, were the objects of his approbation and affection, though in many points grievously mistaken, and long before they were set right in their notions of his kingdom. He expressed a particular preference of the Roman centurion, mentioned in Matt. viii. 5. though a Gentile, and an idolater; and on observing the excellence of his disposition, took occasion to declare, "that many should come from the east and the west, and sit down in the kingdom of God, while the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness,"—plainly intimating to us, that goodness of heart and right practice, and not any external profession, or rectitude of sentiment are the grounds of God's favor. You are likewise well acquainted with the history of Cornelius. So acceptable was he even in the state of a Pagan, that the most extraordinary means were used to give him more light. Acts x. 4. 5. "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa &c."—Nor can it with any reason be doubted, but that if he had lived before the appearance of Christ in the world, and died in the state of a Pagan, he would have been forever happy.

Again, consider that a sincere desire to know and to do God's will is a certain pre-

servative from all dangerous error. It would be one of the grossest reflections on the equity and goodness of God to suppose the contrary; or to imagine that any one, in whom this qualification is found, can be suffered to perish for want of any necessary instruction or information. This would be to suppose, that he has suspended our salvation on conditions which he does not give us power to perform; and that we may be the objects of his displeasure, though faithfully attached to his laws, and anxious to find out and to do all that he requires of us. Let no one entertain any such apprehensions of the fountain of wisdom and goodness. He who faithfully wishes to know the truth, and who does his best to discover and to practice it, must be approved by the deity and cannot possibly mistake fundamentally. In all his inquiries, he is under the superintendency and protection of heaven. The criminality of error lies entirely in the vicious passions from which it proceeds; but such a person cannot be under the power of any such passions. I had rather, indeed infinitely, be in the wrong as to these speculative points, with a humble, inquisitive and honest mind, than be in the right without it. No point of faith, which a person with such a temper can reject, is essential. "The meek will God guide in judgment. To the upright he will shew his way. The wise shall understand, but none of the wicked shall understand." He that does the will of God, our Saviour tells us, "shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." *Dr. Price.*

(To be Continued)

HYMN ON CANDOR.

ALL-SEEING God! 'tis thine to know
The springs whence wrong opinions flow;
To judge, from principles within,
When frailty errs, and when we sin.
Who among men, great Lord of all!
Thy servant to his bar shall call;
Judge him, for modes of faith, thy foe,
And doom him to the realms of wo?
Who with another's eye can read,
Or worship by another's creed?
Trusting thy grace, we form our own,
And bow to thy commands alone.
If wrong, correct; accept, if right;
While faithful we improve our light,—
Condemning none, but zealous still
To learn and follow all thy will.

Scott.

ON THE EXCUSES OF THE IRRELIGIOUS.

"EXCUSES for irreligion are drawn from the failings and imperfections of christians.—There, says the profligate, are your boasted saints. They have their faults, as well as those who make not so great pretensions to piety. Thus it happens, that some remains of imperfection, some constitutional infirmity, some unamiable weakness of good men, is brought forward and exhibited in all the triumph of illiberality to the gaze of a censorious world. The character of the mind is drawn from a single trait, from some casual wrinkle, some unlucky deformity. The point in which a good man is as frail as others, is selected and contemplated with renewed pleasure, while those points, in which he is superior to other men, are unobserved or unacknowledged. This is partial, unjust, uncharitable, iniquitous. But the excuse closes not here. Of what religion has failed to remove it is most absurdly called the cause. If apparently devout and pious habits are ever found associated with a temper, which is not as open as day to melting charity, it is religion which hardens the heart, it is religion which locks the coffers. Whatever passion it has failed to subdue, or whatever fault it has been unable to prevent, it is impiously said to encourage. Equally absurd would it be, to attribute the weakness of a broken bone to the kind attentions of the surgeon, the pain of a wound to the balmy hand which would assuage it.

But of all the faults of Christians, from which excuses for irreligion are drawn, the occasional extravagances into which pious men have fallen afford the most plausible apologies. The history of religion is ransacked for instances of persecution, of austerities and enthusiastic irregularities, and when they are all collected, the cold hearted, thoughtless irreligionist exclaims, these are the fruits of piety! But why is it never considered, that the same ardent temperament, the same energy of passions, if they had been united with any other subject, would have rushed into similar extremes? In a mind of such a mould, religion as is often said, is the occasion only, not the cause of extravagance. When enthusiasm, however, is the result of mere ignorance, as it most commonly is, the excuse entirely fails. Ignorance is not devotion, nor the mother of devotion, zeal is not religion, enthusiasm is not piety, solitude is not purity, spiritual pride is not conscious

innocence, and the preternatural heat of the passions is not the warmth of love to God or man. You would not judge of the usual moisture of any region from the occasional inundation of its rivers. The influence of true religion is mild, and soft and noiseless, and constant as the descent of the evening dew on the tender herbage, nourishing and refreshing all the amiable and social virtues; but enthusiasm is violent, sudden, rattling as a summer shower, rooting up the fairest flowers, and washing away the richest mould in the pleasant garden of society."

A COLLECTION

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WE have read with great satisfaction, the first number of this work. The design of the Editor, REV. JARED SPARKS, is to give to the public some of the most valuable theological essays, which have not been published in this country, or being embodied in voluminous works are not accessible to the generality of readers. It will be his particular object "to select such articles as have intrinsic merit, and are calculated to strengthen the faith of Christians in the divine origin and authority of their religion—to diffuse a critical knowledge of the Scriptures—to exhibit rational and consistent views of the christian scheme—to inculcate principles of religious liberty and toleration—to encourage the exercise of piety and charity—and to secure obedience to the laws of Christ.—And it will not be doubted, that writings of this character and tendency may be found in the works of such men as Sir Isaac Newton, Whitby, Emlyn, Clarke, Lardner, Chillingworth, Jeremy Taylor, Penn, Locke, Hoadly, Sykes, Price, Paley, Bishop Law, Blackburne, Priestley, Le Clerc, Farmer, Wakefield, Barbauld, Chandler, James Foster, Benson, Cogan, Watson." We most sincerely wish the Editor may be encouraged to prosecute his plan. And we shall feel that *we* have done something in the cause of truth, if we can promote in any degree the circulation of this work.

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